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The Unitarian Home Missionary College,

MANCHESTER.

ON

THE STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING OF THE SESSION, 1895-96,

OCTOBER 2ND, 1895,

BY

J. E. MANNING, M.A.

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On the Study of the Old Testament.

My subject for this evening is "*The Study of the Old Testament.*" To treat such a subject adequately, in all its aspects, would require not one address but many, and I shall be obliged to confine myself chiefly to one aspect of it, touching others only incidentally. I intend to dwell upon the development of the Critical Study of the Old Testament, and all who know anything of the history of criticism will understand it is only possible for me to deal with this in a cursory manner in the short time at my disposal.

The critical study of the Old Testament dates from the period of the Reformation. Before that time, there was, properly speaking, no such thing as biblical criticism, whether of the Old or of the New Testament. People were, for the most part, content to take the bible on trust as expounded by the priests, and it was only heretics who ventured to think there was, perhaps, more in the bible than the common people were allowed to know.

I. Let me quote the words of a distinguished Theological writer in the 15th Century:—

"Two books have been given to us by God," says *Raymund of Sabunde*, Professor of Theology and Medicine at Toulouse, about 1456, "the book of Nature and the book of the Holy Scriptures. The first book was given at the Creation. All things then made were letters in this book, man himself being the chief. The second book was given later, because man, being blind, could not read the first properly. The first book, Nature, was the common property of all, and all could read it. The second book the priests alone knew how to read. The first could not be corrupted, or incorrectly expounded; even heretics (!) could not misunderstand it. The second, however, may be falsified and incorrectly expounded"; and the writer implies that the bible *had* been corrupted and falsified.

The words are taken from the prologue to Raymund's *Theologia Naturalis*,—a prologue never found except in the first editions of his work; for in 1595 Pope Clement VIII. ordered it to be placed in the index of forbidden writings. The reason for this prohibition is not clear, for Raymund was a true son of the Church, and not even the most suspicious supporter of sacerdotal claims could infer lack of reverence for the priesthood from his words. But he was open to the suspicion of putting the Creation of God as a prior authority to the bible; and hence all pious Roman Catholic editors of his works have carefully omitted these dangerous words.

"Even heretics" could not falsify the book of Nature! But heretics had falsified the bible, that is, they had found in it something different from the priestly interpretation. This constituted them heretics in the eyes of the Church. In the year 1184 *Peter Waldensis* was excommunicated by Lucius III. for preaching what he conceived to be bible teaching. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse totally prohibited the use of the bible to laymen. In 1234 the Council of Tarragona condemned as heretical anyone who had a translation of the bible in the vernacular in his possession, and only translations approved by the Church, and prepared with the interests of the Church specially in view, were permitted. This was before Raymund's day. But he, true son of the Church as he was, experienced the suspicious interference of the Ecclesiastical authorities. After his day, the same inquisitorial prohibition everywhere pursued biblical students suspected of heresy. *Simon*, "the father of biblical criticism," a Roman Catholic, was followed all his life by the hostility of the Church for his free interpretation and honest investigation of the bible. Every honest critic from Simon's day to this, has met with the Church's censure. The works of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and of the Reformers generally, critical or other, were condemned by the second of the "Ten Rules" attached to the index; the third prohibited all translations of the bible by heretics; the fifth, all lexicons, grammars, concordances tainted by heretical scholarship. What is to be noticed about these "heretics" is, that however imperfect the results of their study, they were on the right way, and, in their conscientious adherence to the

principle of independent investigation of the bible, they were the pioneers of all subsequent criticism. The Reformation was the logical outcome of the principles adopted by the leaders of thought in the 15th and 16th Centuries.

II. The College, whose forty-first year we are met together to inaugurate to-day, adopts the principle of free inquiry in its fullest sense. Tradition and dogma alike stand in the way of the bible critic, and both have been fruitful sources of error. The College is at one with the principles of the Reformers. In its recognition of unbiassed truth as the sole criterion of investigation, it guards against the limitations which prevented the Reformers from carrying their principles to legitimate conclusions. The bible must be studied as we study history, or literature, or science, viz., with one object in view, the elucidation of truth. We must dismiss from our minds all preconceived ideas and all prejudice, and seek only the absolute truth.

What *Eichhorn* was the first to call "the higher criticism," *i.e.*, thorough or scientific criticism, is, as I have said, of modern growth. Timid people fear it. But all true lovers of their bible ought to welcome it. A man who reads his bible daily, and can quote long passages, does not necessarily know his bible. Indeed, a very large percentage of bible readers know practically nothing whatever about the bible, being ignorant of facts which modern research has brought to light. They are content with the old stereotyped views, and look upon new light as heresy. *Jerome*, in his day, had to contend with those who, he contemptuously says, "thought ignorance was holiness." He was so profane as to call them, in his haste, "*bipedes asellos.*" The genus is not yet extinct, and there are, even now, those who regard modern biblical criticism with undisguised suspicion. But criticism is the pathway of light. It is the test of knowledge, the method of its verification. It is not truth itself, but the method by which truth is found. The honest critic has but one object in view—to find the truth. He eliminates the false; he follows the strict laws of thought; he puts clearly before his mind the evidence for and against. He must not lose himself in side issues, or beg the question, or suppress fact, or give

undue prominence to any special aspect. The man of science who argues from his prejudices rather than from the facts before him, is sure to go wrong. So is it with the bible critic; he must take the facts as they are, candidly and fairly. It is due to the fact that for centuries there had been no such thing as honest criticism of the bible, that the modern critic has such a mass of accumulated rubbish to clear away. From this cause, too, criticism has been largely destructive, and hence one reason why it has been regarded with suspicion. It has been compelled to use the mallet and the chisel freely. But its aim is not primarily destructive any more than the sculptor's aim is destructive. Every chip of marble that flies under his deft blows brings him nearer to the form he wishes to disentomb. So every blow dealt by the honest biblical critic to the traditional and dogmatic surroundings of the bible brings him nearer to the bible as it actually is, *simplex munditiis*, unadorned by the fancy drapery in which the Church has clothed it. Every step biblical criticism has taken since it began, at the time of the Protestant Revolution, to our own day, when it has assumed the form of an exact science, has been preparing the way for better knowledge and truer faith; it has been building a surer belief, because laying the foundations on truth and fact. None but those willing to be deceived need fear modern biblical criticism. You cannot study the works of modern critics without being impressed with the conviction that they are honest men, who, whether orthodox or heterodox, are seeking the truth according to their light. If one is unconsciously biassed in one direction, he is forthwith corrected by another. This, doubtless, leads to an enormous multiplication of books, and the reading of them is weariness to the flesh. But what comes forth from the battle of the books is this, that certain principles of investigation are recognised as alone valid, and, among them, that the bible must be studied as literature, that all traditional views and dogmatic prepossessions must be laid aside, that the canons of literary criticism must be applied to the bible as rigidly as to any other collection of writings. As critics from *Rowe* to *Delius* have applied the laws of literary criticism to the works of Shakespeare, and have determined, as far as may be, which are genuine and which are not, so

have *Simon*, *Eichhorn*, *Ewald*, *Delitzsch*, *Wellhausen*, *Driver*, *Cheyne*, and a host of others, applied the same laws to the study of the bible, and exploded opinions which for centuries had kept a believing world in the dark, but have produced at the same time solid results which go to build up a truer appreciation of the value of the bible as a great literature.

Now the principles of literary and historical criticism are, like the principles of investigation in physical science, nothing more than common sense rightly applied,—accurate investigation of truth, impartial sifting of evidence. A careful biblical critic will see that his conclusions are not contradicted by the historical facts of the period he is investigating, or by the special circumstances, laws, institutions, habits and customs of the people then prevalent. He will take into consideration the conditions affecting the transmission of books, the prevailing errors to be found in texts, the ignorance and carelessness of copyists, and all other fruitful sources of error. He will discuss the integrity of the writings before him, and find out whether, if an author is named, he is, or is not, the real writer ; whether the work has been edited, or whether it bears the stamp of original composition. He will ask whether it is all derived from one source, or is a compilation from many. If there is evidence of several sources, he will seek to know how the various documents came into existence ; why, when, from the pen of what writer. He will want to know if a document is genuine throughout, or whether there has been any interpolation ; and, if so, when, and with what object the interpolation was made. Was it innocent, or fraudulent ? What purpose was the forgery intended to serve ? He will examine the style, the language ; if he finds an elaborate style, indicating an advanced literary culture, in a writing for which claims to high antiquity are made, or if he discovers words which belong to a period long posterior to its supposed date, he will discuss the date of the work uninfluenced by traditional views, and assign to it a date more consonant with the facts of the case. It may be an old writing re-edited, with marks of antiquity removed by the editor. If so, he will have a pretty problem to solve, and his sagacity will be tested to the utmost. No honest

biblical critic asserts dogmatically more than the facts warrant. Indeed the best biblical critics never assert dogmatically at all. They say, at most, the facts are such, and they point to such and such conclusions. They are entitled, however, to assert positively that much in the traditional teaching is wrong. The general principle of modern biblical criticism is, in a word, the scientific principle of cautious investigation of fact, impartial judgment, careful observation, unbiassed discussion, logical reasoning. It needs, of course, more than honesty and common sense. In its highest branches it requires qualifications which only few men possess, extensive linguistic, historical and archæological knowledge, and most of us can only toil painfully in the footsteps of men like *Gesenius*, *Tischendorf*, *Driver*, and admire the exactness of their knowledge, and the sagacity and unflinching honesty with which they apply it.

III. Let me indicate a few of the results of modern biblical criticism. The prevailing belief concerning the Old Testament has been that Moses wrote the Pentateuch ; Joshua and Samuel the books called by their names ; that David wrote the Psalms ; Solomon, Proverbs and the Song, and that each of the prophets wrote the book to which his name is attached. These were put together somehow, at sometime, by somebody ; and so we got our Old Testament. But the researches of *Buhl*, *Dillmann*, *Westcott*, *Robertson Smith*, *Davidson*, *Ryle*, have made it clear that the putting together of the books of the Old Testament in the form we have it now was a process extending over at least 500 years, and with it are mixed up some of the most stirring episodes in the life of the Jewish people. So with regard to the composition of the various books, it is now known that some consist of elements whose existence was not dreamed of before the beginning of this century. The Pentateuch, all the historical books, the book of Psalms, Proverbs, the book of Isaiah, are compilations more or less skilfully put together out of pre-existing materials by various editors at different times. Some, like Kings and Chronicles, proclaim themselves compilations ; others, like the Pentateuch and Isaiah, bear internal evidence of compilation. Under biblical criticism the Pentateuch has

assumed new life, and Deuteronomy has become one of the most interesting books of the bible. Driver's new "Commentary" brings out luminously its many points of historical, archæological, and linguistic interest, and not less the fine religious tone that pervades the book. From the time that *Astruc*, in the middle of last century, hinted at a Jehovist and an Elohist writer in the Pentateuch, each new critic has seen reason to confirm his judgment. Isaiah, once believed to be a single writing by one man, is now believed to be a collection of prophecies, some by Isaiah, but some certainly belonging to the period of the Exile, and some also as certainly being post-exilic. Job, once believed to be the oldest book in the world, is not earlier than the age of Jeremiah; most probably it belongs to the period of the Captivity. The Psalms, once believed to be all written by David, are now known to have been written by authors at very different periods, and very few can be regarded as of Davidic authorship. Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, are all late. The Song of Songs, once assigned to Solomon, and interpreted by the early Christian fathers as representing Christ's love for his Church, is now supposed to be either post-exilic or, if earlier, to have been by a writer of the Northern Kingdom, and is simply a graceful dramatic poem, illustrating the old story of the power of true love triumphant in the presence of great temptation. So one might go on. There is scarcely a book in the Old Testament which is believed now to be exactly what the traditional views have regarded it as being. The knowledge we have gained is so much stored up on the side of truth.

That the truth thus gained is reliable a brief review of the progress of biblical criticism will show, or, at any rate, will prove that the conclusions have not been hastily arrived at, but have been the result of long years of careful and plodding study.

IV. The old method of settling difficulties in the bible was the random method of pure imagination, or the erratic method of dogmatic assumption. According to Rabbinical theory the order to be followed is Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah. Why? Because, says the *Gemara*, "since the book of Kings ends in ruin, and Jeremiah is, all of it, ruin, and Ezekiel has its beginning ruin, and its end comfort,

and Isaiah is, all of it, comfort, we join ruin to ruin, and comfort to comfort." So with regard to the statement of Deuteronomy (xxxiv. 5) that Moses died in Moab; that, according to the Gemara, is no bar to his writing Deuteronomy. It calmly says: "It is only unto this passage Moses wrote, afterwards Joshua wrote the rest." And did Joshua write of his own death? for it is said (Josh. xxiv. 29) "And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, and they buried him in the border of his inheritance." The Gemara says: "Eleazar finished that." But it is written "Eleazar, the son of Aaron, died." "Phineas finished that." And Samuel, did he write his work? But it is written "And Samuel died, and they buried him in Rama." Yes, "Gad, the seer, and Nathan, the prophet, finished that."

The process, you see, is perfectly simple. If one man could not have written it, being dead, another man must have written it. If not Moses, then Joshua, or Eleazar, or Phineas. If not Samuel, then Gad, or Nathan.

Josephus is no better a critic. He says Moses did indeed write "in the holy books that he died," but, as a matter of fact, he "on a sudden disappeared in a certain valley" while embracing Eleazar and Joshua, and he mentioned his own death "lest they should venture to say that, because of his extraordinary virtue, he went to God" (Jos. Antiq. IV. 8, 48).

These random theories have found favour in all ages. The old Puritan divine *William Gouge*, "Arch-Puritan" Gouge, in the 17th Century, says, in reply to the objection that certain Psalms do not claim to be by David and have no title, "If they have no title, why should they not be ascribed to David rather than to any other, considering that the book of Psalms is indefinitely attributed to him in Luke xx. 42. ("David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.")? Again, "The 90th Psalm carrieth this title, "A prayer of Moses, the man of God." This, indeed, *is* "the prayer of Moses in regard to the substance and general matter of it; but as a *Psalm*, it was penned by David. He brought it into that form. David, as a prophet, knew that Moses had uttered such a prayer, in the substance of it; therefore he prefixeth that title before it."

The authority of the New Testament is regarded by others, also, as decisive on critical points. Some modern commentators believe that Zechariah was written by Jeremiah, because in Matt. xxvii. 9 some of his words are ascribed to that prophet.

It is obvious that random criticism of this kind can lead to no useful results, and we must look to the forces at work at the Reformation for principles that lie at the basis of exact critical theories. It is true that *Origen*, in the third century, had endeavoured to do something for a sounder knowledge of the text of the Old Testament. In his *Hexapla*, a six-fold Polyglott of the Old Testament, the first ever compiled, he placed the Hebrew text and the Greek text, together with that of the Septuagint and of three other Greek versions, side by side, and tried to find by comparison a more reliable text for the Septuagint, the version regarded by the Jews as authoritative until is was adopted by the Christians. In this work, which occupied him for twenty-eight years, and was finished just before his death, Origen's object was not critical, but purely practical. In his time the critical spirit which leads us in the present day to the investigation of texts as a scientific study, was not yet awakened. Though, doubtless, he wished partly to improve the manuscript tradition, his special object was to maintain the authority of the Septuagint against the Jews, who had begun to disparage it, and to quote later Greek versions against it. Accordingly he exhibits these versions in parallel columns, side by side with the original, and tries thus to find a basis for the construction of a better text. The work thus done was most important. Eusebius and others later transcribed parts of the Hexapla, and the part containing the Septuagint became the standard of all subsequent editions of this version.

At the end of the 4th Century, *Jerome* also had endeavoured to produce, directly from the Hebrew, a correct version of the Old Testament in Latin. At first, his attempt went no further than correcting the old Latin version, for which purpose he used the Septuagint text in Origen's *Hexapla* as his model. But soon he thought of undertaking a new translation, and, in face of much discouragement from his friends (even Augustine tried to dissuade him,

on the ground that a Latin version which disagreed with the Septuagint would do more harm than good), and much opposition on the part of his enemies, who accused him of setting up his translation as superior to the inspired Septuagint, he produced that translation which has become the authoritative version of the Scriptures in the Roman Catholic Church, the Vulgate.

When the Reformed doctrines were beginning to spread, this version was declared "authentic" by the Council of Trent, in 1545, and a revised edition was ordered to be printed. This appeared in 1590, the Pope, Sixtus V., issuing with it a bull, which declared the edition final, "to be held as true, legitimate, authentic, and unquestioned," and it anathematised all who dared attempt to alter the text. Unfortunately for the infallibility of the Pope, this edition was full of mistakes, and soon a new edition had to be issued, the blame for the mistakes being thrown upon the printer! The new edition appeared in 1592, when Clement VIII. was Pope, and it is this edition which is regarded by all Catholics as of superior authority to all other versions, even to the Hebrew original itself. It is in many respects an admirable version, though by no means perfect, as a familiar illustration will show. The traditional horns of Moses, found in most mediæval portraits, sprouted synchronously with the spread of the Vulgate, which translates, by a curious misunderstanding of the Hebrew, the passage in Exodus which says that "the skin of his face shone" when he came down from the Mount, "*quod cornuta esset facies sua*,"—"that his face was horned" (Exod. xxxiv. 29).

After *Jerome*, for many centuries nothing was done in the way of the critical study of the bible, except as I have said, by a heretic here and there, whose heresies were promptly nipped in the bud by burning and torture.

At the beginning of the 16th Century, *Cardinal Ximenes* (1436—1517), published his Polyglott, the Complutensian. Ximenes was Archbishop of Toledo, Grand Inquisitor and Prime Minister of Spain. He was anxious to promote the study of the bible, which had been for so many years neglected, though he opposed with fanatical determination the translation of the bible into the language of the people,

declaring haughtily that "they respect only what they do not understand, and despise anything which becomes easily accessible to them." A translation was, therefore, a dangerous profanation. The Polyglott was a costly work, and was done entirely at the Cardinal's own expense. He could, however, well afford it, "having the income of a king and the wants of a monk." He employed the best scholars of the day. In the Old Testament portion, the Vulgate stands between the Hebrew and the Greek texts, meaning, according to the Prolegomena, that Christ, the Romish Church, was being crucified between two thieves, the unbelieving Jews on the one hand, and the schismatical Greek Church on the other. The Polyglott, comprising the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Targum of Onkelos to the Pentateuch, the Vulgate, the Septuagint, and the Greek New Testament, was begun in 1502, finished in 1517; it was published with Papal approbation in 1520, three years after the Cardinal's death.

In 1506 *Reuchlin* (1455—1522), published his "Rudimenta Hebraica," a grammar and lexicon, with the distinct purpose of enabling laymen, as well as priests, to acquire a knowledge of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew. "I honour St. Jerome," he said, "I value Lyra as a master, but I worship truth as my God." He was a good Catholic, but he was always in the thick of work and the throes of controversy, which advanced by rapid strides the cause of the Reformation.

These attempts to introduce more exact knowledge of the bible roused bitter opposition on the part of the scholastics and monks; an opposition still more bitter when the Reformers, with *Erasmus* at their head, began, by their scholarly examination of the texts of the bible, to lay the foundation of what has since been known as biblical criticism. With them it was chiefly criticism of the Canon of Scripture, and its interpretation and authority. Later on, under *Cappel* and *Walton*, the original text and the versions claimed chief attention, and it was not until the 17th Century that the question of biblical study in its literary aspects began to be considered. In the conviction that the bible must be its own interpreter, that tradition and ecclesiastical authority must both yield to truth, the Reformers insisted on the literal

sense, distrusting altogether the allegorical sense so persistently believed in from the time of Philo down to the beginning of the 16th Century. They distrusted it as the ally of tradition. They rejected the Massoretic pointing; denied the authority of the Septuagint, and of the Vulgate; they rejected the Apocrypha on critical grounds; they insisted (though not always consistently) on the plain grammatical sense. They began also to treat freely of authorship and exegesis generally. Luther denied that Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes; he thought it made little difference whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not; he rejected Esther, saying that "it hath a great deal of heathenish naughtiness." Calvin thought Ezra to be the real author of Malachi, Ezra having assumed that name as a *nom de plume*. The Reformers, in their belief that as God Himself wrote the Scriptures it mattered little who held the pen, went, perhaps, too far in their indifference to the actual authorship. In this they illustrated the rudimentary condition of biblical criticism. The study was as yet in its swaddling clothes. But a sign of vigorous life was the number of lexicons, grammars, texts, and commentaries which began to be poured from the press.

In the 17th Century, *Louis Cappel* (1585—1658), a learned Protestant theologian and scholar, found out that even Protestants were not prepared to accept unbiassed truth. He proved, as against *Buxtorf*, that the Massoretic pointing was not an essential part of the Hebrew language, being, as Lowth later called it, "but the Jews' interpretation of the Old Testament." In this Cappel offended his Protestant brethren, who held that since their protest against Rome was founded on Scripture, to allow the possibility of inaccuracy in the text was to cut the ground from beneath their feet. He was accordingly condemned by the Swiss Protestants, and found great difficulty in publishing his work, the *Critica Sacra*.

The Swiss Protestants, whose opinions were largely influenced by the teachings of the elder Buxtorf, believed that the vowel signs in the Hebrew text were of divine authority. They held that Adam had invented them in Paradise, or that they had been there directly communicated to him from heaven; they had then been transmitted to

Moses, and by him were communicated to the people. It is true that Moses did not punctuate the law when he wrote it, but that was to allow oral tradition to have a voice in the true interpretation of it. As there were, according to tradition, seventy different meanings in the law, it was an additional reason why Moses did not use the signs that the various meanings could be more easily brought out without them. To fix the meaning of the law with a hard and fast interpretation would be to prejudice both the law and the lawyers! The Swiss divines further believed that during the Captivity the pronunciation of the vowels had been forgotten. Ezra, however, restored it, and it was again forgotten during the struggles that followed the destruction of the Second Temple. After the close of the Talmud, the Massorites contrived the points as we now have them, and permanently fixed the pronunciation. This is why they are not mentioned in the Talmud. The Massoretic system of points and accents doubtless preserved the pronunciation and intonation of the Synagogue.

The Roman Catholic *Morinus* (1591—1659, born of Protestant parents, but joined the Roman Catholic Church in 1618), took up the same position as Cappel, but in defence of Church authority and tradition. Since the text was defective, who but the Church could say which reading was correct? Here was a strong point against the Reformers, and a controversy was waged between the champions on either side for many years. By the Zürich Consensus in 1675 supporting the theory of Buxtorf, Heidegger, and others, the principle of Protestantism received its first serious check at the hands of its own friends, a check which delayed the spread of biblical criticism, by binding it down once more to scholastic tradition.

Meanwhile *Brian Walton* (1600—1661) published in England his Polyglott (6 vols., 1654—1657), "the greatest critical achievement of the 17th Century," giving the text in nine different languages; and soon after its appearance he published his "*Considerator Considered*," in reply to *John Owen*, who found things "prejudicial to the faith" in the Prolegomena of the Polyglott. In this he blames the Catholics for supposing that because a text is uncertain, "therefore all must flee to the authority of the Church;" and he also blames "some

Protestants" (the Swiss) for assuming the Hebrew points to be of divine origin, "thereby," he says, "involving themselves in extreme labyrinths;" and, declaring his own conviction that "the truth need not to be patronised of an untruth," he acknowledges that the points were invented by the Rabbins, yet says the sense of the text might be quite certain without punctuation, and, on the other hand, that the Scriptures did not at all depend upon the authority of the Church.

Between 1669—76 *Matthew Poole* (1624—1679) published his *Synopsis Criticorum Biblicorum*, a work of considerable merit, now antiquated. Poole is interesting to us as making a violent attack on *John Bidle* (1616—1662) in his "Blasphemer slain with the Sword of the Spirit; or, a Plea for the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, wherein the deity of the Spirit is proved against the cavils of John Bidle. Lond., 1654,"—an attack which Bidle did not deign to notice.

Meantime, in other directions, great things were rising from small beginnings. *Spinoza* (1632—77), claiming complete freedom of thought and belief, had ventured to declare that the historical books of the Old Testament were a conglomeration of many originals put together by one editor, probably Ezra. Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch; Chronicles belonged to the Maccabean period; Job was a translation from a foreign tongue. All this was, more or less, shrewd conjecture on his part, rather than the result of critical study. His supposition that Job was a translation is a revival of a statement in an old commentary falsely assigned to Origen, that Moses translated the book of Job out of the Syriac into Hebrew.

In 1638 *Richard Simon* (1638—1712) was born at Dieppe. He has been called "the father of biblical criticism." As a youth he was already held in suspicion for reading heretical books, such as Walton's Polyglott, and began to apply historical criticism in a systematic manner to the study of the Old Testament. His work on the "Critical History of the Old Testament" he had some difficulty in publishing, owing to the persistent opposition of the ecclesiastical authorities. It owes its chief merit to the fact that it brings together the results so far of biblical criticism, and presents them in one view. It was assailed by Catholics and Protestants alike for precisely the same reasons as in

the case of Cappel. Bossuet attacked him on one side, *Le Clerc*, or Clericus, a Dutch Divine, on the other. But Simon was not a man to submit tamely to anybody's criticism, and he replied with spirit. His opponents were, however, almost too much for him. His book had been printed with the necessary sanction, but the publication was delayed by his desire to dedicate it to the king. Meantime, the printer, with an eye to business, had circulated a few copies. They excited angry feelings in orthodox bosoms, for Simon had boldly declared that Moses could not be the author of the Pentateuch, though he had appointed annalists from whose writings the Pentateuch was afterwards compiled. Through the influence of Bossuet, the whole edition was seized and destroyed, and the Oratorians, to which order Simon belonged, drove him from among them. He, however, published his "Critical History" not long afterwards (in 1685), in Holland. His book is invaluable, not only for his own contributions to the critical study of the bible, but as an exposition of the growth of that study up to his date.

In 1753 *Astruc* (1684—1766) a professor of anatomy at Toulouse and afterwards at Paris, who, like Raymund of Sabunde, loved the study of the bible, published his "Conjectures upon the original documents which Moses appears to have made use of in writing the book of Genesis." This was an epoch-making book in the history of biblical criticism. Astruc wrote a large number of medical works, and was quite unknown as a critic of the bible. He was in his seventieth year when he ventured to put forth, with some hesitation, and anonymously, his opinion that the names Elohim and Jehovah (or Jhvh) are used in such a way as to imply the use by Moses of two main documents, with others of minor importance. He was the first to express this view, and from that time the study of the Pentateuch assumed a new aspect.

About the same time *Bishop Lowth* (1710—1787) put forth his excellent work on Hebrew poetry, giving an insight hitherto unknown into the literary structure of the Psalms and other poetical parts of the Old Testament. With Astruc and Lowth essentially new questions were started in biblical criticism, *i.e.*, questions of criticism in a literary aspect.

Then *Eichhorn* (1752—1827), declaring that adverse critics "may

snort at higher criticism" as they will (he was, as I have said, the first to use the expression "higher criticism"), proceeded to the critical investigation of the bible with enthusiasm and an open mind. "If learning fail me," he says, "no one will find me lacking in love of truth and strict investigation." His accurate knowledge of Hebrew enabled him to do good service in showing the difference in style between the two documents pointed out by Astruc. From his time began the struggle between what is known as the *Documentary Hypothesis*, viz., the theory that the books of the bible, and especially of the Pentateuch, consist of compilations from more ancient documents, and the *Fragmentary Hypothesis*, started in 1792 by *Alexander Geddes* (1737—1802), a Scotch Roman Catholic, viz., that the Pentateuch is made up of a number of fragments. Geddes was suspended for his pains by the ecclesiastical authorities, and all true believers were warned against him.

From that time to this the various aspects of all the problems touched upon by writers since the Reformation have been expounded by able critics in an ever-increasing number of learned works, *De Wette*, *Gesenius*, *Bleek*, *Ewald*, *Knobel*, *Hupfeld*, *Graf*, *Kuenen*, *Wellhausen*, *Reuss*, *Dillmann*, *Delitzsch*, *Cheyne*, *Driver*, and many others; none having done better service than Ewald.

Ewald (1803—1875) was a pupil of Eichhorn. His "History of the People of Israel" did for Jewish history what Niebuhr's "History of Rome" did for Roman history. It created an epoch in the study. It took a larger and more comprehensive view of the history of Israel than had been taken before, gathering up into its account the literary history of the people and the doctrinal development of their thought, and weaving them together into their social and political history. He does not admit that the bible loses by the frank acknowledgment of the facts demonstrated by criticism. On the contrary, he shows that it gains both in interest and instructiveness. His life was full of activity. He had a bitter feud with F. C. Baur and the Tübingen school. He took an important part in the establishment of the Protestanten-Verein. He was imprisoned three weeks on a charge of libelling Prince Bismarck.

De Wette's work, well known through the translation made by Theodore Parker, is valuable in many ways, but especially for its historical criticism of the sources and age of the Pentateuch. The best edition (unknown to Parker), edited by Schrader, contains important additions. De Wette was born in 1780 and died in 1849.

Bleek (1793—1859), a pupil of De Wette, the "candid" Bleek, went with his master and the advanced school on most questions of age and authorship. He regarded the Jehovist document as a supplement or enlargement of the Elohist writing.

Hupfeld (1796—1866), successor of Gesenius at Halle, distinguished *three* independent sources of Genesis, and he says that a *fourth* later writer put them together. In 1865 he experienced the truth that bigotry is hard in dying. He was accused by certain Theologians before the Minister of Public Worship, of having taught exegesis in a sense inconsistent with the recognised character of the Old Testament as a divine revelation.

Kuenen (1828—1891), following Graf, and followed by Wellhausen and Robertson Smith, has practically brought biblical criticism to its present condition. No future critic will venture to disregard his work. One important result of it is that almost all critics to-day regard the framework of the Pentateuch (known as the *Priests' Code*) as of late date, having been written after the exile.

It will be seen from what I have said that the strife among critics, orthodox and heterodox, has been chiefly waged over the composition of the Pentateuch. The net result at present is the triumphant establishment of the theory which regards it as a compilation from different sources of various dates, though, even now, there are not wanting critics who, like Professor Sayce,* maintain the Mosaic authorship.

In England, until quite recently, biblical criticism has been an unknown science. In 1818, *Horne* (1780—1862) pointed out that he was unable to find at home the information he wanted concerning the bible, and was obliged to go to German sources for it. His book, "Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures," excellent in many ways, is now behind the age. *Colenso, Davidson, Robertson*

* *See* "Contemporary Review," October, 1895.

Smith, the writers of *Essays and Reviews*, have all done good work; *Cheyne* and *Driver* are doing good work now. The new "International Critical Commentary," if one may judge by the few volumes already published, is likely to mark an epoch in English biblical criticism. The "Speaker's Commentary" is, perhaps, the feeblest undertaking of the kind ever attempted.

V. What has been the result of all this investigation in its influence upon the believing world? Has it done good, or has it done harm? We reply, it has done unqualified good. So far as it has elicited the truth, "by which no man ever yet was injured," it is a positive gain to the world; so far as it has failed to elicit truth, it leaves room for further investigation, which is always an incentive to progress. Perhaps the most valuable result is the clear recognition on the part of critics, orthodox and heterodox alike, that the bible does not lose by investigation. It is everywhere agreed that *knowledge* of the bible is altogether good. The orthodox declare that knowledge of facts will tend to restrain the rationalising tendency of the heterodox; the most advanced critics agree that knowledge is desirable in order to enlighten the eyes of the dogmatically orthodox. The old feeling that the less we study and the more we believe of the bible the better, is dead. The champions on both sides of the controversy look for facts as the best weapons in their warfare. But has criticism in any way injured the *religious* value of the bible? Are people, so far as they know the results of biblical investigation, any worse morally or religiously than before? Are they less devout? It is true the time has hardly come to test, for the new knowledge filtrates slowly, and the pulpits of the orthodox are slow to communicate it to the people. But we may safely say that as "no man was ever injured by the truth," so no man ever will be injured by it, and when the fullest knowledge possible of the bible is diffused as widely as possible, so far from injuring the piety of the world, it will strengthen and confirm it.

Our duty in the meantime is plain. We have only one ideal,—truth; one rallying cry,—truth; one aim,—the discovery of truth. We must apply all diligence to the investigation of the bible, guided

by the desire for truth, and restrained only by the limits which truth imposes; and proclaim unhesitatingly the results of honest research. The moral and religious value of the bible is unaffected by the battles of criticism. If it be, as Matthew Arnold says, that the permanent value of the Old Testament is that it preaches righteousness, proclaiming for ever "thus ought the children of God to do," that value remains whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or whether there are two or more documents at the base of it; or whether the first Isaiah, or the Deutero-Isaiah, or some unknown prophet, preaches righteousness. The Psalms contain the same lessons; their music is as sweet, whether David or another be the author. The conscience and moral sense of mankind speaks in the bible as plainly now as it ever did. Though we no longer believe that God visited the earth in bodily form and spoke to the patriarchs face to face, and no longer believe we have the actual words of God when the prophets use that impressive phrase "Thus saith the Lord," yet do we know that God really visits the earth, and makes it glad by His presence, and we feel through all our being the thrill of His voice in the emotions that lead us to the moral and religious life. The bible is essentially literature; it conveys its own lesson. It writes history, and leaves us to find out the lesson involved. It writes a Psalm, and leaves it to make its own way to our hearts. It teaches righteousness;—but in its own way.

I cannot help thinking that we in our free churches might make more use of our opportunities than is commonly done with the Old Testament. It is a storehouse, from which the preacher may draw treasures, new and old. The majority of our people are prepared to listen to what we have to tell them. The results of criticism need not be forced upon them dry and bald. With care and judgment a preacher can make them a useful part of his pulpit ministrations. As to the literary treasures of the Old Testament in our English bible, they are simply inexhaustible. And for the enforcing of religious lessons, there are no words comparable to the words of our bible. "Ye that love God, hate evil" (Ps. xcvii. 10). "Seek good that ye may live, and so the Lord shall be with you" (Amos v. 14). Let the preacher get imbued with the music and spirit of the bible and he will feel as

Jeremiah felt when he said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. xv. 16).

Where can you find any writing, ancient or modern, more profoundly impregnated with the ethical and religious spirit than Deuteronomy? Where can you find the highest motive of human action, the love of God, more clearly expressed? Where will you find the inborn need of the soul for reliance upon God, and prayerful intercourse with Him, more beautifully or more simply expressed than in the Psalms? Where will you find the disastrous consequences of sin as alienation between God and man more powerfully depicted than in the Prophets? The Old Testament is not exhausted, and its lessons may be enforced more savingly than ever before by him who can place himself in the midst of the life, and speak out of the whirlwind of feeling, or from the calm and trustful faith of its writers. "Is not my word like a fire, and like the hammer that breaketh in pieces?" (Jer. xxiii. 29). And again, "Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" (Mic. ii. 7). In warning, in encouragement, in comfort, in praise, in prayer, in thanksgiving, every page of the Old Testament is inscribed with answers to the soul's need; and for the healing of the wounds of sorrow and despair, what solace is there like that which the bible gives in the assurance, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"? (Deut. xxxiii. 27).

That the instruction given in this College may enable its *alumni* to gain the fullest knowledge of the bible, and to communicate it in a living way and a devout spirit to their hearers, is my earnest prayer.

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